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Approved For Release 2005/11/29 : CIA-RDP79R00971A000100080036-9

**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**

24 May 1955

**MEMORANDUM FOR: The Holders of the National Intelligence Digest (NID)**

**SUBJECT : Discontinuance of the NID**

1. As the result of an informal survey among the holders of the NID, we have discovered that there is little demand for this publication. Nearly all recipients use the National Intelligence Estimates, the OCI Handbook, or other intelligence publications.

2. Considerable effort and expense go into the monthly revisions of the NID. Since it is clear that the limited use to which the NID is put does not justify this effort and expense, we have decided to discontinue its publication forthwith.

3. Our records indicate that you are the holder of copy number \_\_\_\_\_. Would you please return this copy to:

Central Intelligence Agency  
2430 E Street, N. W.  
Washington, D. C.  
Attn: CTSC, 1334 M Bldg.

Robert Amory, Jr.  
Deputy Director/Intelligence

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**SECRET**

20 May 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Estimates Staff

SUBJECT: Evaluation of the Usefulness of the National Intelligence Digest and Recommendation Concerning Its Continued Publication

The Problem

1. To determine the usefulness of the National Intelligence Digest to the consumers. In view of the wide dissemination of National Intelligence Estimates and OGI Handbooks, the question has been raised whether, in view of the considerable effort and expense which goes into the monthly revision, the continued publication of the NID is desirable.

Facts Bearing on the Problem

2. The NID is disseminated to approximately 80 consumers. These include:

The White House  
IAC Agencies  
NSC Agencies  
CIA (Headquarters and Abroad)

3. The NID is revised monthly by O/NE. The revisions include the summarizing of new NIE's, the writing of other new estimate sections if necessary, and the updating of the current sections. This work requires a minimum of 100 man-hours each month of staff analysts' time. An editor must be selected from the staff to organize the revision, and since no one analyst can be permanently assigned the task, continuity is lost. In addition, typing (by O/NE), reproduction (by Reproduction Division), and dissemination (by O/CD) entail further effort and expense each month.

4. Past experience has conclusively proven that the NID must be revised at least once a month. Indeed a few users felt that the NID should be revised more often. This, of course, reflects a misunderstanding of the purpose of the NID.

5. A limited poll on the usefulness of the NID was conducted in September 1954. This poll revealed a greater use of the NID than is

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now the case. We believe this decline is due to the fact that, since NIE production is now more closely coordinated with that of NSC papers, NSC agencies no longer need the NID as a reference in connection with their work. Also, there are now more OCI Handbooks available.

#### Discussion

6. Approximately 90 percent of the consumers of the NID were polled. We believe this is sufficient for an objective evaluation of the use made of the NID. There are naturally certain pitfalls in such a poll. For instance, the frequent use of the NID by one VIP would offset its being used infrequently or not at all by 20 lesser officials. Polling was done either by interview or, when the user was well known to the poller, by telephone. Detailed oral replies will be found in Tab A; a written reply in Tab B.

7. The poll disclosed that use of the NID in Washington is minimal (incidentally no VIP uses it) because of the availability of other documents, such as the NIE's and O/CI Handbooks, and the extensive reliance on oral briefings by qualified intelligence analysts. While preparation of briefings by lesser officials occasionally involves reference to the NID, other sources are apparently used more extensively. Some consumers said that the NID is useful for orienting new officers. But obviously this does not occur frequently. While a few indicated that they considered the NID very helpful, especially as a reference work, the overwhelming majority stated that they would not miss the volume. Even for those who use the NID, it is simply an unnecessary although handy luxury.

8. Of 74 consumers polled, 71 either used the NID seldom or not at all, while three used the volume frequently. We cannot be sure that these figures are not too high, because for instance, in the case of an agency having five copies, we did not question five different persons, but were given an over-all evaluation by just one or two. However, we believe that the 74 and 71 figures are not more than 10 points too high, and in any case we are convinced that their ratio is approximately correct.

#### Conclusion

9. The very limited use of the NID which this poll disclosed does not warrant the amount of time and expense involved in the monthly revision.

#### Recommendation

10. That you recommend to the DD/I that publication of the NID be discontinued.

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Approved For Release 2005/11/29 : CIA-RDP79R00971A000100080036-9

TAB B

C O P Y

12 May 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Estimates Staff  
Office of National Estimates

ATTENTION :

SUBJECT : Usefulness of the National Intelligence Digest

REFERENCE : Memo. same subject, dated 11 April 1955, from

1. Canvass of using components within Clandestine Services indicates that the National Intelligence Digest now serves only a marginal need here. This is because of our thorough utilization of the National Intelligence Estimates and the OCI Handbooks. The former are used exhaustively in connection with our long-range planning and also the formulation of current operational projects. The latter are widely distributed both at headquarters and in the field, and provide a reference that is constantly utilized. It is noted that the Handbooks have been developed since the date of our memorandum on evaluation of the NID on 21 August 1953, and it is the consensus of all users that OCI Handbooks now fulfill those needs for which the NID was particularly welcomed at that time. Consequently, for our peculiar purposes at least, there is now very little gap between the NIE series and the OCI Handbooks.

2. The conclusions expressed above were unanimous among the persons consulted within Clandestine Services. These included PFC, and EE, WE and FE Divisions. No specific response was obtained from overseas personnel, but recent pertinent correspondence was cited by the Headquarters personnel consulted. This included several field suggestions for cancellation of established dissemination of NID material. It is only fair to note that this suggestion was influenced by the continuing effort to reduce top-secret material at field installations to an absolute minimum.

C O P Y

11 April 1955

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**The Usefulness of the National Intelligence Digest**

1. You will recall that we briefly discussed this matter on the telephone about ten days ago. To recapitulate: we are conducting a sort of market survey among the recipients of the Digest to find out just how useful it is to them.

2. Since a considerable amount of work goes into the monthly revisions, we wonder whether the Digest is sufficiently useful to warrant this effort. I remember that you asked how much it cost to maintain the Digest on a monthly basis. I hesitate to mention a figure. In the first place my figure would probably be inaccurate. Secondly, and more important, we do not wish to influence those being polled. We just want answers to certain questions which could be covered by the single query: do you find it useful?

3. Following is a list of questions. Would you be so kind as to ask these of your people, both in Washington and overseas?

- a. How often do you use the Digest? Daily? Once a week? Once a month?
- b. How many people in your office use it? How often?
- c. Would you sorely miss the Digest if publication were ceased?
- d. Assuming you do find the Digest useful, what suggestions do you have for improving it, regarding:
  - (1) The general scope? Too many subjects covered? Too few?
  - (2) The format of the various sections?
  - (3) The length of the sections? Is there enough detail?
  - (4) The quality of the content? Is the estimate and analytical material useful?
  - (5) The usefulness of the charts and maps?

4. I will shortly move to a new assignment, therefore will you please send your reply to: Office of the Chief of the Estimates Staff, ONR  
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Attn: 

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